

House Standing Committee on Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

**Presentation on Trails, Rest Areas,
Welcome Centers & TODs**

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Claire Stevens, Strategic Outreach Specialist

Bill Wahl, North Region Associate Region Engineer

Brad Wieferich, Engineer of Design



Trails



Claire Stevens, Strategic Outreach Specialist

U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) & Trails

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

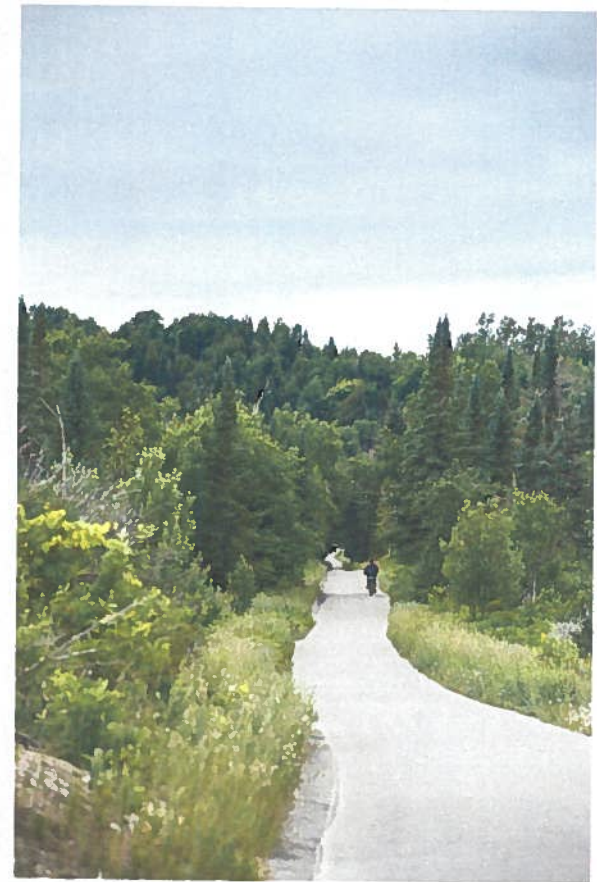
- ❑ Competitive grant program to Act 51 agencies, including DNR as applicant
- ❑ Funds projects for the acquisition and development of bike paths, pedestrian streetscapes to improve safety, safe routes to schools projects, rail trail projects
- ❑ Authorized by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21-st Century Act (Map 21)
- ❑ Frequently used as match with DNR's Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund



U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) & Trails

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

- ☐ Funded through Map 21
- ☐ MDOT serves as pass-through agency
- ☐ Supports DNR's trails program
- ☐ FY 2014 Michigan received \$2.8 million



Trail Planning

- ☐ All seven MDOT regions have Bicycle and Pedestrian committees
- ☐ MDOT has a State long-range Transportation Plan and Regional Nonmotorized Plans or Strategies
- ☐ Part of scoping process



Partnerships

- ❑ Memorandum of Agreement between MDOT and MDNR on rail trails, bridges, NEPA, and Belle Isle
- ❑ Sharing of GIS data
- ❑ Committee between MDOT and MDNR on Early Coordination and Collaboration
- ❑ MDOT's Transportation Service Centers and Regions routinely assist DNR on design, construction and acquisition projects
- ❑ Work closely with Michigan Trails and Greenway Alliance
- ❑ Assist DNR in promulgation of rules for Pure Michigan Trails



Local Impacts

VASA Pathway

- ❑ 31 miles of trails east of Traverse City
- ❑ Generates 2.6 million in direct annual spending

Michigander Bicycle Tour

- ❑ Highlights Michigan's rail trail network
- ❑ MDOT Study found that this event generates \$480,000 in economic benefits to the state and in 2014 participants came from 16 different states





Rest Area & Welcome Center Program

Bill Wahl, North Region Associate Region Engineer



Rest Area and Welcome Center Overview

- ❑ 64 Rest Areas and 14 Welcome Centers
- ❑ Welcome Centers located throughout the state at border crossings and key nodes in the transportation system
- ❑ 8 Welcome Centers in the lower peninsula, 6 in the upper peninsula
- ❑ Staffed with experienced and knowledgeable travel counselors
- ❑ In 2014 over 5.3 million visitors to Welcome Center facilities
- ❑ One privately managed visitor center at Dodge Road rest area



Connection to Pure Michigan

- ❑ Welcome Center staff provide tourism information and advice to visitors
- ❑ Welcome Centers carry brochures for locations and attractions statewide
- ❑ In 2014, over 4.6 million brochures distributed to Welcome Centers

Governor's Conference on Tourism

- ❑ Welcome Center staff in attendance
- ❑ Training and networking with tourism industry officials
- ❑ MDOT and Travel Michigan jointly hosted session to familiarize Welcome Center staff with new tourism opportunities throughout state



Connection to Pure Michigan

- ❑ Strong relationship between staff at MDOT and Travel Michigan
- ❑ Ongoing dialogue regarding opportunities and issues
 - Welcome Centers help promote Pure Michigan events
 - Liaison roles to quickly answer constituent questions
- ❑ MDOT liaison attends Michigan Travel Commission meetings
- ❑ Technical assistance with implementation of Tourism Strategic Plan
 - Primarily related to trails and biking



Connection to Pure Michigan

Highway Hospitality Committee

- ❑ Joint committee of MDOT, Michigan Travel Commission, Travel Michigan, and the tourism industry
- ❑ Co-chaired by MDOT and the Michigan Travel Commission
- ❑ Focuses on finding solutions to tourism issues related to transportation
- ❑ Catalyst for development of Adopt-A-Welcome Center program
- ❑ Has strengthened relationship between MDOT and the tourism industry



Connection to Local Communities

Community Guides and Displays

- Community tourism guides prominently displayed
- Displays highlighting communities or areas of the state
- Coordinated display of literature for each part of the state

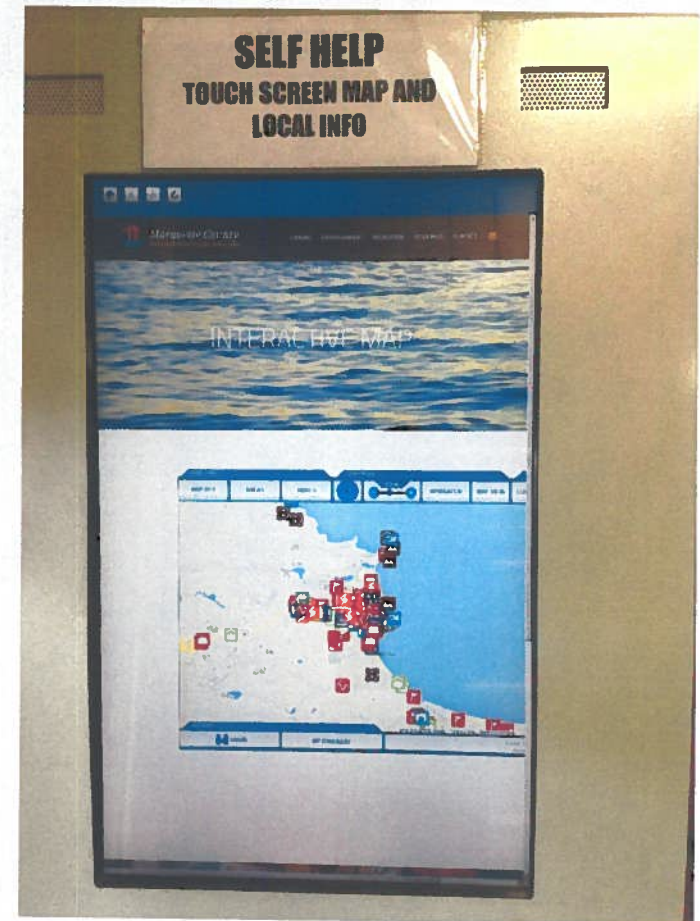


Connection to Local Communities

☐ Adopt-A-Welcome Center Program

- Coordination between local community and Welcome Center
- CVB branded literature bags for visitors
- Wi-Fi and digital kiosks at Welcome Centers
- Volunteers to supplement Welcome Center staffing

☐ Master Gardener program



Support for Events and Attractions

Literature brochure distribution

- Brochures distributed free of charge
- Communities and attractions can have brochures distributed to any or all Welcome Centers

Displays and on-site events

- Opportunity to highlight special events
- Encourage tourists to experience unique aspects of local area



TODs and Logos

Promoting Business

Brad Wieferich, Engineer of Design



TODS – What is it?



- ❑ TODS (Tourist Oriented Directional Signs) is a sign program, offered by MDOT which provides directional signing for eligible tourist attractions from the state rural roadway system.
- ❑ A tourist oriented activity is any lawful cultural, historical, recreational, educational, or commercial activity that meets the eligibility requirements.

TODS – Eligibility



- ☐ Open 8 hours/day, 5 days/week of which one day is either Saturday or Sunday.
- ☐ Major portion of income from motorists not residing within 10 miles.
- ☐ Attendance of at least 2,000 in 12 months.
- ☐ Specific criteria for food, lodging and historical places.
- ☐ Must be eligible and listed on the Pure Michigan website.

TODS – Cost & Status



- ☐ \$360 per year per sign
- ☐ \$120 per year per trailblazer
- ☐ Cost for logo extra

- ☐ 712 businesses
- ☐ 1,054 mainline structures
- ☐ 1,389 signs

Logos – What is it?



- ❑ Logos is a sign program, offered by MDOT which provides directional signing for motorist service categories off from the state rural/suburban freeway system.
- ❑ Categories – gas, food, lodging, camping pharmacies and attractions.

Logos – Eligibility



- ☐ Miles from interchange (3 to 15 miles)
- ☐ Minimum hours and days
- ☐ Required services
- ☐ Licensing if necessary

Logos – Cost & Status

- ❑ \$850 per year per direction
 - ❑ Cost for trailblazer included
 - ❑ Cost for logo extra
-
- ❑ 2,786 businesses
 - ❑ 1,306 mainline sign structures
 - ❑ 4,969 mainline logos

Largest participant.....



Questions?



Better. *Faster.* Cheaper. Safer. Smarter